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8 June 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: NIE-65: Soviet Bloc Capabilities through 1957

1. Considerable progress has been made in NIE-65, "Soviet Bloc Capabilities through 1957", over NIE-64, "Soviet Bloc Capabilities, through Mid-1953", (12 November 1952):

a. Greater analytical precision in the section on political warfare capabilities, which concentrates upon the critical areas of the world, and which distinguishes between the capability to overthrow governments and the capability to influence governments and peoples.

b. Greater emphasis on scientific and technical factors, which occupy about a quarter of the discussion in NIE-65.

c. Greater clarity in the military strengths and capabilities sections, with fewer figures, more emphasis on military programs, and a more specific analysis of Bloc air defenses and of Soviet capabilities to deliver atomic weapons in the US.

2. There are an unusually large number of tentative reservations on this paper. Probably the number could have been reduced by somewhat more ambiguous wording, but the points at issue deserve exploration at the IAC meeting.

a. OIR reservation to Conclusion 1 and to Paragraph 16. The OIR wording contains an estimate that, through mid-1957, any struggle for power at the top is unlikely to affect Soviet capabilities or the stability of the USSR. The Board and the other agencies were unwilling to make such a sweeping estimate.

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a struggle -- see footnotes to Conclusion 1 and paragraph 16). Moreover, OIR is confident that the new rulers of the USSR will not make mistakes; the rest of us are not.

h. G-2 footnote to Paragraph 41g (page 26). G-2 would further downgrade, or eliminate a "may" estimate of the SEC on the crystallization of animal viruses.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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